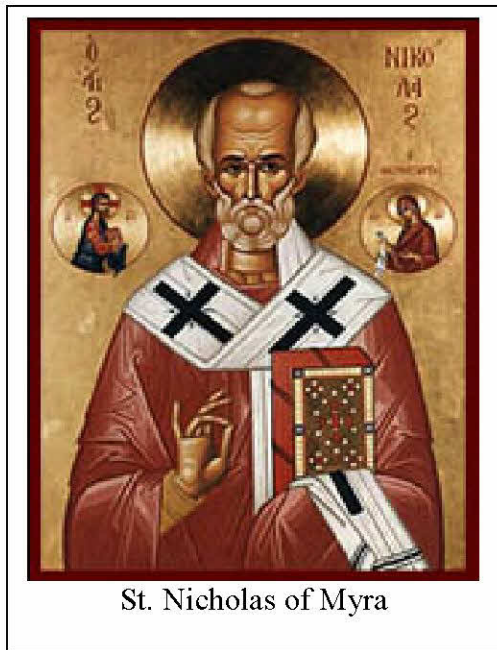


Hronia Polla (Many More Years)
Happy Name Day to our Students

December 06 Nicholas "Nicholas" Tortora



St. Nicholas of Myra

Saint Nicholas also called Nikolaos of Myra, was a historic 4th-century saint and Greek Bishop of Myra. Because of the many miracles attributed to his intercession, he is also known as Nikolaos the Wonderworker. His reputation evolved among the faithful, as was common for early Christian saints.

St. Nicholas was born of a wealthy family and his parents raised him to be a devout Christian. His parents passed away and while still young obey Jesus' commandments to sell what he own and give to the poor. St Nicholas devoted his whole life in serving God by assisting the needy, the sick, and the suffering. For his dedication in serving God he was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships.

Many stories and legends have been told of St. Nicholas' life and deeds and explain why he is so beloved.

A poor man had three daughters with no dowries. In those days, in order for a father to find suitable prospective husband for his daughter, he must have something of value to offer, hence a dowry. Without a dowry, she would end up unmarried and forced to becoming a slave. St. Nicholas upon hearing this poor man's dilemma, mysteriously, on three different occasions, would toss a bag of gold through the open window and so the bag of gold would appear in their home providing the needed dowries. The bags of gold, tossed through an open window, are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. And so St. Nicholas is a gift-giver.

Another story tells of three theological students, traveling on their way to study in Athens. A wicked innkeeper robbed and murdered them, hiding their remains in a large pickling tub. It so happen that Bishop Nicholas, traveling along the same route, stopped at this very inn. In the night he dreamed of the crime, got up, and summoned the innkeeper. As Nicholas prayed earnestly to God the three boys were restored to life and wholeness. St. Nicholas appears and appeals to God to return them to life and to their families. And so St. Nicholas is the patron and protector of children.

When he was young, Nicholas sought the holy by making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. There as he walked where Jesus walked, he sought to more deeply experience Jesus' life, passion, and resurrection. Returning by sea, a mighty storm threatened to wreck the ship. Nicholas calmly prayed. The terrified sailors were amazed when the wind and waves suddenly calmed, sparing them all. And so St. Nicholas is the patron of sailors and voyagers.

Other stories tell of Nicholas saving his people from famine, sparing the lives of those innocently accused, and much more. He did many kind and generous deeds in secret, expecting nothing in return. Within a century of his death he was celebrated as a saint. Sailors, claiming St. Nicholas as patron, carried stories of his favor and protection far and wide. St. Nicholas chapels were built in many seaports.

No less was he known for his zeal for the truth. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council of the 318 Fathers at Nicaea in 325; upon hearing the blasphemies that Arius brazenly uttered against the Son of God, Saint Nicholas struck him on the face. Since the canons of the Church forbid the clergy to strike any man at all, his fellow bishops were in perplexity what disciplinary action was to be taken against this hierarch whom all revered. In the night our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lady Theotokos appeared to certain of the bishops, informing them that no action was to be taken against him, since he had acted not out of passion, but extreme love and piety. The Dismissal Hymn for holy hierarchs, The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock ... was written originally for Saint Nicholas. He is one of the best known and best loved Saints of all time.

Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, an icon of meekness, and a teacher of temperance; for this cause, thou hast achieved the heights by humility, riches by poverty. O Father and Hierarch Nicholas, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion in the Third Tone

Saintly One, (St. Nicholas) in Myra you proved yourself a priest; for in fulfilling the Gospel of Christ, venerable One, you laid down your life for your people and saved the innocent from death. For this you were sanctified as One learned in divine grace.

Hronia Polla (Many More Years) Happy Name Day to our Students

December 11 Braden "Noah" Banasihan



St. Noah

The Great Flood.

Because the corruption of Mankind was so great, God commanded Noah, who was righteous in God's sight, to begin building the ark. When the ark was ready, Noah entered in with his wife, his three sons and their wives, and at God's direction, took with him all the animals and birds which could not live in the water: of the clean ones, that is, the ones which could be offered in sacrifice, seven pairs, and of the unclean ones, one pair, in order to preserve their kind upon the earth. He also took a reserve of food for them all for an entire year.

On that day when Noah entered into the ark, the waters of the flood gushed upon the earth, and "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Gen. 7:11). There came about a mighty flood from the seas and oceans and from heaven rain poured down upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. The water rose over the earth higher than the highest mountains; it prevailed for 150 days and drowned all men and animals except the ones that were on the ark.

Then Noah released a dove which, when it had flown away, could not find a place to live, because the water was still over the heights of the entire earth, and it returned to the ark. After seven days, Noah again released the dove from the ark. This time the dove returned in the evening and brought a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Noah understood that the water had receded from the earth and that plants had appeared upon it. After waiting another seven days, Noah again released the dove, and this time it did not return to him. He opened the roof of the ark and beheld that the earth had dried.

Then, at the command of God, Noah went forth from the ark with all his family, and released all the animals that were with him.

Noah erected an altar, a place for offering sacrifices, and he offered for his salvation a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God from all the clean animals and birds. God mercifully accepted the

